

**9953 South Beach Drive
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110**

January 12, 2002

Attorney General John Ashcroft
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

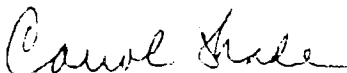
Dear Attorney General Ashcroft:

From the start of the U.S. vs. Microsoft lawsuit, three long years ago, I have been confused as to why our federal government would choose to pursue and punish one of the most beneficial companies in America today. Microsoft has done more for the world of computing than any other single entity in the world. Without their products, the enormous marketplace for IT products that exists today would simply not be around - not at all.

Included in the proposed settlement are many points that are punitive towards Microsoft. One point requires Microsoft to open its proprietary software interfaces to other software manufacturers. This is an amazing affront to Microsoft and its lifetime investment in its own product, and a first in an antitrust lawsuit. Yet, Microsoft is willing to renounce this and many others of its fair business practices to see an end to this unfortunate lawsuit.

For the millions of Microsoft stockholder and consumers of Microsoft products, an end to the suit cannot come soon enough. For many, the government's prolonging the suit has already hurt financially. In the end, I wonder who will benefit from all of this wrangling. The Department of Justice owes all involved parties an end to this suit. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Carol Shade